

Many things can affect your blood pressure (BP). It is critical to understand what medications and substances you should avoid to support a healthy BP.

Be your own health advocate by following a healthy lifestyle, including not smoking, limiting or stopping the use of alcohol, exercising, following a low sodium diet and checking your blood pressure as part of your daily routine.

High blood pressure – a systolic blood pressure reading of 130 mmHg and above or a diastolic reading of 80 mmHg and above – is a serious health condition that can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Take these steps to control your risk.

- Illicit and recreational drugs- cocaine, methamphetamine
- Herbal supplements-ephedra, St. John's wort
- Foods that contain tyramine when taking antidepressants, such as MAOIs (monoamine-oxidase inhibitors)

- Some over-the-counter pain relievers can raise blood

- Alcohol to 1 drink a day or less for women and 2 drinks a day or less for men
- Caffeine to less than 300 mg per day (about 2-3 cups of coffee); avoid with uncontrolled hypertension
- Salt to no more than 2,300 milligrams (mgs) a day and [an ideal limit of no more than 1,500 mg per day](#) for most adults.